**How to...create a successful campaign strategy**

The key to success for any campaign is to have a winning strategy in place before you start. If you don’t, then you could miss out on key opportunities to speak to the right people, at the right place, at the right time. This template is designed to help you use the fundamentals of campaigning to get started on your plan. Good luck!

# **Step 1: What exactly is the issue?**

As advocates who are keen for change, we often want to break down barriers all at once. But it is important for you to pinpoint exactly what needs to be changed. For example, “My local neighborhood is inaccessible” is too general a problem to tackle successfully. Exactly what is inaccessible in your neighborhood? If there are too many examples to choose from, then pin it down to one problem: “My neighborhood is inaccessible because local store owners put out advertising boards on the street”.

Make sure you have clearly defined your goals so you know what you are aiming for and will know when you are successful. Your goal should be **SMART** (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely).

**Your turn**

Write a one-sentence summary of the issue.

Write a SMART goal for your campaign.

# **Step 2: What is the evidence for the issue?**

For your campaign to be successful, you need to identify the facts that will convince people of your argument. It may take some effort, but you need to determine how to present your argument in a simple and effective manner. It is crucial to have information that is targeted to your audience and in a format that is easy to distribute and understand. Having some good facts and figures at hand will also make you feel more confident about approaching decision makers.

Gather evidence to support your campaign. This could be finding current statistics, photos, case studies, best practice examples, and more. The information needs to be clear, concise, and presented in a way that is easily understandable in order to motivate others to take action.

**Your turn**

What types of evidence already exist that I could use?

What evidence do I need to gather myself?

What steps do I need to take to gather this evidence?

# **Step 3: Know your audience**

As you gather evidence, you need to think about who the target audience is for the campaign. The target audience should be the person or organization who is responsible for the campaign issue and has the power to bring about the change. For example, if you want to change a dangerous street crossing in your city, this is dealt with municipally rather than federally, so your primary audience would be on a local rather than national level. You might also have secondary target audiences who could also help you achieve your campaign goal.

**Your turn**

What decision makers can bring about the change needed?

Are there any other key players?

Who influences the decision makers?

# **Step 4: Build relationships**

Relationship building is a crucial skill for any campaign to succeed because it means you can have many people working towards the same goal. It is also more likely to grab the attention of decision makers and the media if a large group of people are working on one issue. A good place to start is to think about what groups are affected by the issue. For example, clutter on streets doesn’t just affect people who are blind or partially sighted, but also wheelchair users and parents with strollers. Local disability groups can often provide a wealth of knowledge and support, as well as larger organizations like CNIB. It is essential that whoever joins the campaign understands the objectives and messages. Reach out to different organizations that can come together united under a common goal.

**Your turn**

What people, groups and organizations can I connect with who might be affected by this issue and want to help?

# **Step 5: Timing**

As with any plan, timing is key for when you want to launch your campaign. You should think about what milestone events on the timeline are important for your campaign (such as legislation dates, awareness days, local meetings) and what needs to be done to prepare for each deadline (for example, you don’t want to meet with a decision maker and find they already voted on the issue the week before!). Having deadlines for different phases will help shape your campaign and keep it on track for success.

**Your turn**

What are the important dates coming up in the future for this campaign?

# **Step 6: Monitoring success**

At the beginning of the campaign, you would have set clear goals for what you wanted to achieve. You had a clear idea what success would look like, and how you would know when you achieved it. Now you can measure the impact the campaign has made. Celebrate what you have achieved (what worked and why?) and think about what you would do differently next time.

**Your turn**

Look at the objectives of the campaign – which ones did you meet?

What is the evidence that you achieved this?

Were there any you didn’t meet, and if so, why?

What would you do again differently?